

ABROAD

PARIS

Trouble in Battalions

The withdrawal of Libyan troops, who confronted the French across a demarcation line in the central-African country of Chad for a considerable period but never officially opened fire, is still far from an acknowledged fact. But although the French have marched off in good faith to the neighboring country of Cameroon, there is some doubt that the Libyans intend to keep the pledge made in the agreement they signed with the French at Tripoli. Journalists have noted the movement of two Libyan columns comprising some one thousand men, thirty Soviet-built tanks, and batteries of SAM-9 missiles northward toward their homeland. Deep suspicion of Libyan intentions remains, however, and it has not been dispelled by the recent breakdown of the "peace" conference at Brazzaville in the Congo, nor by recent high-level insistence by French officials that all is well. There are other worries. President Hissen Habre, who controls the southern part of Chad from his capital at N'Djamena, faces further uprisings in settlements in the southeast; there have already been massacres on both the government and the rebel sides. On top of all this, a new outbreak of famine threatens not only the Sahara region of Chad but its savanna lands as well.

BONN

Ostpolitik Somehow

The recent visit of Rumanian President Nicolae Ceausescu has gone a step toward counterbalancing the blow to the Federal Republic's Ostpolitik delivered by Moscow when it forced East German leader Erich Honecker and Bulgarian president Todor Zhivkov to cancel their carefully planned visits here. Ceausescu was as usual able to resist similar pressure and display his independence from Moscow, at least as far as his travel movements are concerned. But he did little to dissociate himself from the Soviet line with respect to NATO. There was one point, however, on which his German hosts were insistent—the right of several hundred thousand ethnic Germans to emigrate from Rumania westward.

MADRID

Poder

This year marks the four-hundredth anniversary of the building of the Escorial, one of the most powerful structures in Europe and for centuries the visible expression of the might of the Spanish empire. Situated in the rolling hills north of Madrid, the Monastery of St. Lawrence of the Escorial, to give it its proper name, was erected by King Philip II, the man who presided over Spain's golden age and held the threads of European power in his hands. The king was a master of dossiers, and his office in the Escorial was the center of a web of intrigue and bureaucracy that covered half the globe. He spent his last days in a tiny bedroom overlooking the altar of the palace chapel and confronting at the foot of his bed a skull whose brow was encircled with a crown of gold—to remind Philip of the mortality of kings. The vast monastery-palace, built in a gridiron pattern in homage to St. Lawrence, who was roasted to death, is being restored and modernized, espe-

cially the quarters of the monks who continue to inhabit it, and the picture galleries and libraries, which are among the richest in Europe.

HULL

Gifts Beware

Tons of food sent to the families of striking coal miners in Britain by Soviet trade unions have been prohibited from entering the country by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food. Stockpiled at this east-coast port, it must be either returned or destroyed. Some of the supplies sent, including cooking oil, sugar, and condensed milk, have been approved for use. But meat and meat-based products are banned by a law designed to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. A spokesman for the ministry said that the Russian meat products were not acceptable by British health standards. "We do not want anyone to get the idea that any part of the cargo is being excluded for reasons other than normal," he added.

PEKING

Burmese Days

Burmese President General San Yu has just concluded an official visit to the People's Republic of China and found, together with his hosts, that relations between their two countries are on the whole excellent. If there is a bone of contention, it concerns the aid Peking supplies to ten thousand guerrillas of the pro-Chinese Burmese Communist Party, who have been fighting the Rangoon government near the Chinese province of Yunnan for the past thirty years. San Yu's visit is seen here primarily as an effort by the Burmese to make sure they will not be disturbed politically in their role of a super-nonaligned state, a role that suits Peking well. Burma is so insistent on its orientation that it recently quit the official nonaligned movement because its attitude seemed too pro-Soviet.

LONDON

The Older Order

There will soon be a Roman Catholic chaplain at ancient and renowned Eton College, the first since the Reformation, which came a century after it was founded. Eton, which was begun by King Henry VI in 1440 and has probably had more influence on history than any other secondary school anywhere, has been since the middle of the sixteenth century an Anglican establishment. But today, one in eight of its 1,200 boys is Catholic.



"I appreciate all of you turning out to welcome me back."

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